

A perfect

BEAST!

NO more make-up jobs! That's what actor Ron Perlman declared after he played a prehistoric Ulam tribesman in the movie *Quest For Fire*, then followed up with the role of a hunchbacked, facially deformed monk in *The Name Of The Rose*.

But then along came *Beauty And The Beast*, now screening on the Seven Network, and Ron was back in the make-up chair...for five hours a day!

Ron plays Vincent, the powerful man-beast who makes his home in secret tunnels and chambers beneath New York. In the series, he rescues socialite attorney Catherine Chandler, played by Linda Hamilton, and becomes devoted to her.

"When I was first approached, having decided never to do a make-

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up job again, it needed to grab me, to get me excited," Ron told TV WEEK in an interview on the set of *Beauty And The Beast*.

"I only had to read halfway through before I called my manager and asked what I had to do to get the part. I would never have tackled it if I thought it lacked integrity or couldn't challenge my acting skills.

"I thought it was time to be me, but I guess I was wrong."

Both Vincent and the series are very special, according to Ron.

"He is so sensitive, so vulnerable, yet so strong and cultured.



He's half man, half monster ...and the ladies love him

LEFT: Linda Hamilton and Ron Perlman star as Catherine and her ever devoted Beast Vincent, in *Beauty And The Beast*.
RIGHT: The Beast minus his make-up.

He's unlike anything I've had the good fortune to play. A total superhero who is a poet at the same time.

"He's unattractive and attractive all at once."

The series, Ron claims, is a first for network television.

"I don't think anyone's ever seen anything like it before," he says.

"Each episode has to stand on its own, like a separate story. It's a big challenge."

Asked to describe the series to first-time viewers, Ron says: "It's a love story, first and foremost, with gothic and epic proportions."

"The love between the two major characters is as deep as any you'll find in literature. And it's a love presented with monumental obstacles — Vincent is half beast, so the lovers can never consummate their love physically."

"There's a tremendous kind of heat and attraction which emanates from the two characters — none of which can be realised."

According to the fan mail which pours in to Ron at CBS, many American women would love to be in Linda Hamilton's high heels when she gets into clinches with The Beast.

Ron gets dozens of marriage proposals in the mail. Some women ask if he's married (he is) — and if so, does he fool around (he says he doesn't).

"The letters express what these women long for in their own lives," he says. "They think that if they're loved, they'll be made whole, in spite of their limitations."

"I think women want to be romanced. They want to be treated specially. They want to have poetry read to them, instead of sitting

there watching this guy in an undershirt watching football.

"A woman wants somebody not who's doing nice things for her just so he can be asked in at the end of the night — but because he adores her. I think that's what they get when they see Vincent and Catherine."

One letter to Perlman from a viewer says: "Please keep *Beauty And The Beast* on the air. I need to be able to pretend Vincent is real. I wish he were, but then if he was, I'd probably leave my husband and children and run away to live with him. And what would my mother think?"



Linda Hamilton knows the show is a different kind of love story. "This is a romance," she says, "as opposed to all the other shows on TV, where you have sex and not romance. A romance is usually something with obstacles. That's what makes it a romance. We aren't going to jump into bed here."

But Linda does love the look of her leading man. "You have poetry and you have a beautiful beast," she says. "His look is tremendous. I also find Ron very sexy in his make-up."

David Brown
and Brian Haugh